

Becoming: Spiritual Discipline Produces Maturity

1. What is Spiritual Discipline?

The Cost of Mastery

- Running a serious race requires serious training and **discipline**.
- The Greek word for "race" is *agon*, the root of "agony."
- Every great achievement requires **discipline** (10,000 hours for mastery).

The Nature of Discipline: The Christian life is like a race.

1 Corinthians 9:24–27 (ESV)

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Discipline is the **engine** that drives achievement.

Quotes on Discipline:

Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment.

- **Jim Rohn**

Small disciplines repeated with consistency every day lead to great achievements gained slowly over time.

- **John C. Maxwell**

Discipline is choosing between what you want now and what you want most.

- **Abraham Lincoln**

The first and best victory is to conquer self.

- **Plato**

Success requires **discipline and focus**, not just talent.

The Stark Truth: Discipline is often absent from the Christian's **spiritual life**.

2. From Justification to Sanctification

Justification: The moment you are declared righteous by God (spiritual birth).

Sanctification: The **lifelong process** where the Holy Spirit conforms you to the image of Christ.

The goal is **Holiness** (being set-apart).

Partnering with the Holy Spirit: Our Active Role

The Mystery: What is our part versus the Holy Spirit's part?

'Although God will grant Christlikeness to us when Jesus returns, until then He intends for us to grow toward it. We aren't merely to wait for holiness; we're to pursue it.'

- **Donald Whitney** (*Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*)

1 Timothy 4:7–8 (ESV)

...train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

Philippians 2:12 (ESV)

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,

Hebrews 12:14 (NET)

Pursue peace with everyone, and holiness, for without it no one will see the Lord.

3. Our Active Partnership in Transformation

The Holy Spirit's Role (The Power)

- The Spirit is the **Advocate/Helper**.

John 14:26 (NET)

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and will cause you to remember everything I said to you.

- We are **marked with the seal** of the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1:13 (NET)

And when you heard the word of truth (the gospel of your salvation)—when you believed in Christ—you were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit...

- The Spirit produces the **Fruit of Righteousness**.

Galatians 5:22–23 (NET)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control...

Our Part (The Partnership)

- We are **active partners** with the Holy Spirit in our transformation.
- Two Reasons for Spiritual Discipline:
 1. True Christians will increasingly **desire Christ**.
 2. God designed redemption as an **ongoing process** (Justification is immediate; Sanctification is an ongoing).

What Are the Spiritual Disciplines?

- A collection of practices found throughout Scripture that promote spiritual growth.
 - Inward:** Bible Intake, Prayer, Fasting, Silence and Solitude, and Journaling.
 - Outward:** Evangelism, Service, and Stewardship.
 - Corporate:** Worship, the Lord's Supper, and Baptism.

Biblical Examples:

- David meditated on God's greatness and he journaled...

Psalms 8:3–4 (NET)

When I look up at the heavens, which your fingers made, and see the moon and the stars, which you set in place, Of what importance is the human race, that you should notice them? Of what importance is mankind, that you should pay attention to them,

- Paul Prayed for the saints...

Philippians 1:4 (NET)

I always pray with joy in my every prayer for all of you

- Jesus spent time alone in prayer and solitude...

Mark 1:35 (NET)

Then Jesus got up early in the morning when it was still very dark, departed, and went out to a deserted place, and there he spent time in prayer.

- Evangelism was regular practice in the early Church...

Acts 8:35 (NET)

So Philip started speaking, and beginning with this scripture proclaimed the good news about Jesus to him.

The Most Essential Discipline: Bible Intake (Foundation for all others)

4. Avoiding Pitfalls

Trap 1: The Trap of Self-Righteousness

- Discipline is a **means**, not an end.
- Sanctification Micromanaging - comparing performance.
- Right standing is in Christ alone! Disciplines help you move closer to being *like* Him, not *earning* His favor.

Trap 2: Confusing Spirituality with Biblical Spiritual Discipline

- The Bible is **sufficient** for spiritual growth.
- Avoid incorporating external practices that are derived from pagan or demonic religions.
- If biblical disciplines seem boring, the answer is to **pray for desire** for them.

5. Where do I Start?

1. Set a Goal

'By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail'
- Benjamin Franklin

- Make it practical and measurable (e.g., consistency in prayer life by next year).

2. Make a Plan and Find Accountability.

- Create a realistic plan to achieve the goal.
- Share the goal and plan with a trusted person for accountability.

3. Make Time (Not Excuses!).

- Saying "I don't have time" means "This is not important to me."
- Learn to say "no" to things that drain time and energy.
- Making time is the number one thing that will prevent spiritual immaturity.

Hebrews 12:1 (NET)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, we must get rid of every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and run with endurance the race set out for us,